



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER AIRLINE WORKER SENTENCED TO 70 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON IN PLOT TO SMUGGLE MACHINE GUNS TO PUERTO RICO**

Orlando, Florida - United States District Judge Anne C. Conway today sentenced HIRAM RIVERA-ORTIZ, age 35, of Orlando, to 70 months in federal prison on a charge of possession of an unregistered National Firearms Act weapon (machine gun). In addition to the prison term, Rivera-Ortiz must serve three years on supervised release, perform 150 hours of community service and pay a \$100 special monetary assessment. Rivera-Ortiz had entered a guilty plea to the charge on October 18, 2007.

According to the evidence presented at the plea and sentencing proceedings, Rivera-Ortiz met with an undercover agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) on July 30, 2007. The agent, posing as an international firearms trafficker, asked Rivera-Ortiz, an airline worker and former police officer, to transport firearms from Florida to Puerto Rico aboard an airplane. Rivera-Ortiz agreed to transport a total of six firearms, including two machine guns, to Puerto Rico aboard a commercial airliner for \$4,500. At a second meeting the following day, the agent paid Rivera-Ortiz and showed him the six firearms to be transported. The agent also demonstrated for Rivera-Ortiz that two of these firearms were fully automatic machine guns. Once Rivera-Ortiz

accepted a monetary payment and took possession of the firearms from the agent, he immediately was arrested by law enforcement. Rivera-Ortiz later admitted that he was aware that two of the firearms were illegal machine guns.

This case is part of the ATF lead Violent Crime Impact Team, which is part of a U.S. Department of Justice program that assigns extra resources to cities to reduce violent crime associated with firearms. The Orlando ATF Violent Crime Impact Team is partnered with the Orlando Police Department, the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement focusing their investigative efforts on violent offenders who use firearms in furtherance of their criminal acts.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr.